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Giuliano Bacigalupo

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Meinong and Husserl on Existence. Two Solutions of the Paradox of Non-Existence

Giuliano Bacigalupo
Universität Konstanz (Germany)
Université Lille 3 (France)

Résumé : Cet article analyse et compare les solutions données au paradoxe de la non-existence par Alexius Meinong et Edmund Husserl. Nous défendrons la thèse que la solution apportée par Meinong n'est pas convaincante puisqu'elle abandonne le cadre de la logique prédicative – qui est pourtant le lieu où le paradoxe a son origine – pour aboutir à une version de logique propositionnelle. D'autre part, l'approche de Husserl est plus prometteuse puisqu'elle va vers une extension de la logique prédicative, dans laquelle les jugements existentiels doivent être interprétés en relation avec différents contextes ou, pour reprendre la terminologie husserlienne, en relation avec différentes « sphères » ou « niveaux d'être ».

Abstract: This paper analyzes and compares the attempts at solving the paradox of non-existence put forward by Alexius Meinong and Edmund Husserl. It will be argued that Meinong's solution is not convincing since he retreats from the field of predicate logic, in which the paradox arises, to a version of propositional logic. On the other hand, Husserl's approach is more promising since he moves forward to an extension of predicate logic, where existential judgments have to be interpreted in relation to different contexts or, in Husserl's terminology, "spheres" or "levels of being".

1 Introduction

At one time or another, we all have judged that such and such a thing does not exist, for instance Santa Claus, Sherlock Holmes, centaurs and unicorns. However, a few harmless premises about the nature of language force us to infer

from the judgment (say) "Santa does not exist" that the opposite judgment is also true, namely that "Santa does exist". In the literature, this conundrum is usually referred to as the paradox of non-existence and credited to Parmenides. Hence, it does not seem coincidental that the paradox of non-existence shares some traits with Zeno's paradoxes. Although everyone knows that, for instance, Achilles will eventually overtake the tortoise, a few premises about space and time seem to suggest that the opposite will be the case. Similarly, we all know that we do truthfully judge that some things do not exist, but a few premises about the nature of language seem to imply the impossibility of such judgments.

If Zeno's paradoxes were relatively short-lived, this does not seem to be the case with the more resilient paradox of non-existence. Among other reasons, this may be due to the attractiveness of what I will label here as the Procrustean solution: instead of changing the bed, why not amputate the body that does not fit it? Out of metaphor, instead of changing our premises about the nature of language, why not simply expunge negative existential judgments from it? This solution is tempting because language has a very thin, almost dreamlike kind of existence. Let me explain what I mean by this. It would be very difficult to accept the view that the faster object cannot overtake the slower, for the very plain reason that facts teach us otherwise. But the way we speak is not as hard a fact as the way objects move, because we may change—or at least intend to change—the way we speak. Language is a soft fact.

In this paper, I focus on two philosophers who tried to come to the rescue of negative existentials, Alexius Meinong and Edmund Husserl. The first part of the paper dwells on Meinong's handling of the paradox in his article "Über Gegenstandstheorie" [Meinong 1904] and his study *Über Annahmen* [Meinong 1910]. In the second part, the paper raises the objection that Meinong's solution is tantamount to a retreat from the field of predicate logic, in which the paradox arises, to a version of propositional logic. The third part of the paper turns to Husserl's solution of the paradox in his course *Alte und Neue Logik* (1908-1909) [Husserl 2003]. His approach may aptly be described as a move forward to an extension of predicate logic, where judgments may be interpreted in relation to different contexts, i.e., what Husserl labels as "spheres" or "levels of being". More precisely, existential judgments have to be interpreted as cross-sphere judgments: in order to interpret them, we have to "build bridges across spheres". Finally, the fourth part briefly addresses two questions relevant for the contemporary discussion in analytic philosophy, namely whether Husserl is a Fregean and whether Meinong is a Meinongian. In conclusion, I restate the main reasons why Husserl's account has to be preferred to Meinong's, i.e., the main thesis of this paper.

2 Meinong's semantics of facts

In order to understand Meinong's solution to the paradox of non-existence, we first have to address his interpretation of it: which premises generate the contradictory conclusion that something exists if it does not exist. In this context, it is helpful to consider a well-known passage from his article "Über Gegenstandstheorie":

> Any particular thing that isn't real (*Nichtseiendes*) must at least be capable of serving as the object for those judgments which grasp its *Nichtsein*. It does not matter whether this *Nichtsein* is necessary or merely factual; nor does it matter in the first case whether the necessity stems from the essence of the object or whether it stems from aspects which are external to the object in question. In order to know that there is no round square, I must make a judgment about the round square. [...] Those who like paradoxical modes of expression could very well say:
>
> There are objects of which it is true that there are no such objects.
>
> [Meinong 1904, 9 (82–83)]

Here Meinong clearly subscribes to the claim that we have to take our language, or perhaps more precisely the thought structure expressed by it,[1] at face value. For instance, every time we judge that the round square does not exist, the object of our judgment is the round square. At the same time, Meinong is well-aware of how this apparently innocuous approach may lead "those that like paradoxes" to claim something else, namely that there are things of which it is true that there are no such things.

One should notice, however, that the quoted passage does not spell out all the premises needed by "those that like paradoxes". Meinong provides what is missing in the following paragraph: in order to refer to something, it may seem that this something has to exist. Thus, the full argument that leads to the paradox takes the very simple form of a hypothetical syllogism:

1. If we judge that something does not exist, we refer to it.
2. If we refer to something, then it exists.
3. If we judge that something does not exist, then it exists.[2]

The strength of this argument cannot be underestimated. In fact, philosophers have very often opted for biting the bullet: premises (1) and (2) are true and thus negative existentials are contradictory and hence impossible. I call

1. In this article, everything that is couched in the psychological language of "judgments"—to which both Meinong and Husserl adhere—may be rephrased in the more modern language of "sentences" or "propositions".

2. A very similar reading of the paradox is given by [Fitting & Mendelsohn 1998, 168].

this the Procrustean solution because instead of seeing something wrong in the premises that lead to a conclusion blatantly contradicted by the facts, it chooses to change the facts. The bed is not at fault for not fitting the body. Rather, the body is at fault for not fitting into the bed. Meinong, however, does not follow the Procrustean approach and wants to save the soft facts of our language: it is not true that there are things of which it is true that there are no such things, though this thesis is often misleadingly attributed to Meinong (see for instance [Chisholm 1972, 25]). To the contrary, Meinong gives us a brief sketch of how to avoid the paradox, while at the same time referring the reader to his book *Über Annahmen* for a more detailed account. Let us follow his suggestion.

In *Über Annahmen*,[3] Meinong develops the following semantics. First, every judgment refers to both an object and a fact. For instance, the judgment "there is snow" refers to an object, snow, and as a whole to a fact, namely that there is snow. Obviously, the same account also holds for negative judgments. The judgment "an interruption did not take place" refers through its subject to an interruption (the object) and, as a whole, to a fact, i.e., the fact that the interruption did not take place [Meinong 1910, 42–43]. In addition, since judgments can be either true or false, and since Meinong wants to save the intuition that we always refer to a fact when we judge something, he introduces a further distinction: true judgments refer to subsisting facts whereas false judgments refer to non-subsisting facts (see [Meinong 1910, 45–46 (37–38)]).

It should be noticed that "subsistence" (*Bestand*) is the name for the kind of being that pertains to abstract, i.e., non-spatial and non-temporal objects, of which facts constitute a sub-class (numbers would constitute another). As Meinong puts it, his desk occupies a specific position in space and time, namely Graz at the beginning of the 20th century. But the fact that his desk is in Graz at the beginning of the 20th century cannot occupy a spatio-temporal position in turn and is thus abstract. A final terminological remark is now called for to fully capture Meinong's semantics. Instead of speaking of "facts", as I have done until now, Meinong prefers to introduce the neologism "objective" (*Objektiv*). The main purpose of this terminological choice is to underscore an analogy between the relation objective/judgment on the one hand and the relation object/subject of the judgment on the other: as the subject of the judgment refers to an object, so the judgment as a whole refers to an objective (see [Meinong 1910, 44 (38)]).

How does this bear on the paradox of non-existence, as formulated in the article on the theory of objects? Meinong's semantics gives us an explanation why the objects we refer to do not always have to exist and, more generally, why they do not always need to have an ontological status, i.e., existence or

3. [Meinong 1904] references the seventh chapter of the 1900 edition of *On Assumptions* (i.e., [Meinong 1901]). This was later reworked as the third chapter of the second edition [Meinong 1910], to which I refer.

subsistence. The reason lies at hand: only what makes our judgments true has to have an ontological status, namely the objective.[4]

To link back this solution to the above formulation of the paradox, it should be clear by now how Meinong rejects premise (2), i.e., that something exists if we refer to it. But this is only half of the story, since it has to be underscored how Meinong simply transfers the whole ontological weight from the reference of the subject of a judgment to the reference of the judgment as a whole: if we truthfully judge something, the objective referred at by the judgment has to subsist.[5]

Once the difference between Meinong and those that like paradoxes has been clarified, it is worth pointing to their common denominator. What Meinong shares with the Procrustean philosophers is the undoubtedly strong intuition that there has to be something which makes our judgments true, i.e., that there has to be a truth-maker for every judgment. The difference is that those that like paradoxes interpret the objects to which the subjects of judgments refer as their truth-makers, whereas Meinong attributes this function to the objectives, i.e., the objects of judgments as a whole.

Once this is taken into account, it is easy to see, too, why the Procrustean solution is so tempting. As soon as we amputate negative existential judgments from our language, we are left with judgments that smoothly fit a definition of truth that is both intuitive and elegant: classic predicative judgments all seem to follow frictionless the rule that they are true if there is an object corresponding to them. It is the beauty of the bed that leads Procrustes to amputate the body. Meinong, on the other hand, wants to save both: the body of our language and—with a very small adjustment—the bed.

3 Meinong's retreat

The first obvious objection to Meinong's semantics is that, since the fact to which a true judgment refers to has to subsist, it is difficult to see how the object, which is a part of the fact, does not have to exist in turn. Or, in other words, how could something non-existent be a part of something that subsists? Meinong's answer to this is to deny that we are dealing here with a plain part/whole relation [Meinong 1904, 84–85 (10–12)]. Facts are essentially

4. To be more precise, according to Meinong the correspondence does not take place between the judgment and the objective but between the objective as referred to by the judgment—the pseudo-objective, in Meinong's terminology—and a subsisting objective, see [Meinong 1910, 94 (71–72)]. It is from this perspective that [Simons 1986, 103–104] points out that objectives play the role both of truth-makers and of truth-bearers in Meinong's semantics.

5. The literature on Meinong usually focuses only on the first half of the story (for instance, see again [Chisholm 1972], but also "Neo-Meinongians" such as [Parsons 1980], [Routley 1980], [Jacquette 1996], [Zalta 1988], and [Priest 2005]).

different from objects, insofar as the latter are spatio-temporal, whereas the former are abstract. It should therefore be clear that it does not make any sense to consider something spatial as part of something non-spatial.

However, even if one declares himself satisfied by this answer, a few problems still linger. I am not going to address the famous criticisms put forward by Russell in "On denoting" [Russell 1905]. Nor am I going to dwell on Brentano's criticism that Meinong's semantics leads to an infinite regress of facts [Brentano 1966, 91–96].[6] Instead, I would like to put forward a different objection, which is more relevant to the line of reasoning of the present discussion.

Meinong was confronted to the problem that a standard correspondence theory of truth does not fit existential judgments, insofar as it leads to the paradox of non-existence. His solution was to give a truth-definition that would apply to both predicative and existential judgments. According to his semantics, we can say that the judgments "Meinong's desk is in Graz", "Meinong's desk exists", and "Santa does not exist" are all true because they refer to subsisting facts. But, at least at this moment, the suspicion arises that Meinong is simply retreating from a semantics for predicate logic to a semantics for propositional logic. This cannot be considered as a viable solution to the problem of non-existence since our paradox arises only insofar as we try to analyze the inner structure of predicative and existential judgments.

From this perspective, it is easy to see, too, what Meinong's famous claim that objects *qua* objects are beyond being and non-being (see [Meinong 1904, 12 (86)]) amounts to, namely to saying that objects do not play any role in the attribution of truth-values. The same can be said of the principle of independence of being from being-so (see [Meinong 1904, 8 (82)], which credits Ernst Mally for the first formulation of the principle). It is clear that, within the framework of a propositional semantics, no connection can be made between the truth-value of a judgment such as "Santa does not exist" and "Santa has a beard".[7]

To sum up, the solution of the paradox of non-existence given by Meinong cannot truly be considered as a solution. The reason is that—to use and at the same time turn upside down a Quinean metaphor[8]—Meinong retreats from

6. I have explored this objection in [Bacigalupo 2012].

7. A further look at Meinong's semantics even reveals that his semantics cannot be accurately characterized as propositional, since it is not fine-grained enough to grasp logical operations on propositions. For instance, the negation of the judgment that Santa does not exist (i.e., it is not the case that Santa does not exist) is not true because the judgment that is negated by it is false, as classic propositional logic teaches us. To the contrary, this judgment is true because it refers to a subsisting fact—namely the fact that it is not the case that Santa does not exist.

8. Quine's famous metaphor of deserted landscapes (see [Quine 1948, 23]) targets the fictional philosopher Wyman, who is usually interpreted as a placeholder for Meinong's position. Notice, however, that this interpretation is challenged by [Routley 1980, 413, n. 3].

the jungle where this paradox arises, namely predicate logic, to a deserted landscape where every judgment is attributed a truth-value independently from all other judgments.

4 Husserl's sphere-semantics

Let us turn to Husserl to see whether we may find a genuine solution to the paradox of non-existence. First, some bibliographical remarks are due. Although an attempt at interpreting existential judgments can be found in the Fifth Investigation, I am not going to refer to the Husserl of the *Logische Untersuchungen* [Husserl 1901]. Moreover, I am not concerned here with Husserl's main work *Ideen I* [Husserl 1913], though questions of existence lurk in every page there. The reason is that we have to look elsewhere for Husserl's more extensive and—at least in my view— original take on the paradox of non-existence, namely a passage of his lecture on "*Alte und neue Logik*" (1908-1909), published posthumously in [Husserl 2003].

Before putting forward his own solution to the paradox of non-existence, Husserl criticizes, among others, the interpretation of the notion of existence given by Bernard Bolzano. I would like to dwell on this critique not only because it is crucial for the understanding of Husserl's solution to the paradox, but also because, once more, it bears on the line of reasoning of the present article. Bolzano's approach was to block the reference to non-existent objects by reinterpreting existential judgments as judgments about presentations. In addition, presentations are interpreted by Bolzano not as psychological but as ideal entities (what he calls *Vorstellungen an sich*), and are thus akin to what we would now label as concepts. According to this view, when we say "Santa does not exist", what we actually mean is that the presentation or concept of Santa is not valid [Husserl 2003, 169–173].[9] Husserl casts doubts about this line of reasoning because it would indeed be very strange if our thoughts would be so different from their linguistic cloth. As Husserl rhetorically asks, do we really speak in such a roundabout way?

By criticizing Bolzano, we may say that Husserl sides with the anti-Procrustean philosophers: we should not start from a theoretical position—the reference to non-existents is impossible—and from there infer that our language is wrong or does not express our real thoughts. That Husserl takes such a stance in his lecture on logic is even more striking since he himself defended a version of Bolzano's view in an earlier manuscript on intentional objects [Husserl 1979]. However, even though every consistent account that saves the

9. Such an approach to existential judgments is very close to the well-known Fregean one: there is not much difference between interpreting existence as the validity of a concept or as the second-order property of a concept of having at least one instantiation, cf. [Frege 1988, 65].

appearance of our language has to be preferred to a Procrustean bed, it is not at all clear yet what such an account should look like.

After his criticism of Bolzano, Husserl moves forward to the constructive part of his discussion and develops a few simple but crucial semantic ideas. Let us take into consideration the two following scenarios: first, I go to the museum and see the famous painting by Böcklin "The Centaur at the Blacksmith's Shop"; secondly, I really see the centaur, pretty much in the same way as the astonished peasants in the background of the scene depicted by Böcklin see the centaur. In both cases, says Husserl, we would be dealing with exactly the same appearance. From the linguistic point of view, we may say that the same judgment "the centaur is at the village blacksmith's shop" is as true in the first as in the second scenario. Yet nobody will deny that there has to be a difference whether we make this judgment in front of the painting or while we really see the centaur. On his way to clarify where the difference may lay, Husserl notices that the two judgments have the same "sense" (*Sinn*) but not the same "meaning" (*Bedeutung*) [Husserl 2003, 175].

Let us explore what Husserl is aiming at with his Fregean-like distinction between *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*. With respect to the use of the notion of sense, it is relatively unproblematic: the judgment has the same sense to the extent that it is directed to something that appears the same, i.e., something that instantiates the same properties. What can we say about the difference in meaning? According to Husserl, there is a subjective and an objective way of describing this difference. From the subjective point of view, we may say that the two states of consciousness of the speaker in the two different scenarios are different. Relying on a Kantian terminology, Husserl captures this difference by noticing that when I really see the centaur and not just a painting, I *posit* the centaur. On the other hand, if I am standing in front of the painting, I *do not posit* the centaur.

It is from the objective perspective, however, that Husserl's analysis becomes more intriguing. This is due to the introduction of the key notion of "sphere of being" (*Seinssphäre*, alternatively addressed as *Seinsniveau*): every judgment has to be evaluated either at the actual (*wirkliches*)[10] or at an assumed or postulated (*assumiertes*) sphere of being [Husserl 2003, 176]. It is precisely through the reference to the sphere as context of evaluations that we move beyond the sense of a judgment and reach its meaning. The judgment "the centaur is at the village blacksmith's shop" has therefore the same sense insofar as it is a judgment about something that instantiates the same property, but has a different meaning insofar as it may have to be evaluated with respect to different spheres of being. More precisely, if I really see the centaur like the peasants in the background of the painting, my judgment has

10. I render Husserl's use of the term "*wirklich*" as "actual". It should be noticed that by "*wirklich*" Husserl does not simply mean a spatio-temporal actuality, since also ideal objects may be actual.

to be evaluated at the actual sphere of being, whereas if I am just staring at a painting my judgment has to be evaluated at a non-actual sphere of being.

We have reached a clarification of the subjective distinction between judgments that posit and do not posit something: the former have to be evaluated with respect to the actual sphere of being whereas the latter have to be evaluated with respect to a non-actual sphere of being.[11] In addition, it is easy to see how Husserl's intuition may be cashed out within modern day possible-worlds semantics: the judgments that have to be evaluated at a non-actual sphere would simply be the judgments within the scope of the relevant modal operator.

At this point, however, we still do not have all the conceptual tools that we need to interpret existential judgments. The crucial part of Husserl's approach is still missing, namely a distinction between two kinds of judgments. Standard predicative judgments, such as the ones taken into consideration until now, are judgments that have to be evaluated only with respect to one sphere of being, no matter whether actual or postulated. Metaphorically speaking, in order to make this kind of judgment we have to "look" only at one sphere at a time. But—as Husserl puts it—we can also build bridges between different spheres ("*Brücken zwischen Sphären schlagen*" [Husserl 2003, 182]). This yields us a second kind of judgments, which I will label as cross-sphere judgments. According to Husserl, intentional judgments are a first example of such cross-sphere judgments. When I say that I believe, perceive, doubt, etc., that such and such is the case, we have a relation between an object associated to the actual sphere—namely myself—and the sphere(s) of my beliefs, perceptions, doubts, etc. Another example is provided by judgments that compare state of affairs at different spheres (for instance, when I say "Holmes is smarter than I am"). But what is particularly relevant for us is that, according to Husserl, existential judgments, too, are cross-sphere judgments: they cannot be evaluated while "looking" at only one sphere at a time. To the contrary, they build bridges between a postulated sphere and the actual sphere. For instance, if we say that the centaur portrayed in the famous painting by Böcklin does not exist, we are referring to an object associated with a postulated sphere and say of this object that it is nothing, more precisely nothing actual [Husserl 2003, 183].

In order to clarify Husserl's view of existential judgments as cross-sphere judgments, it is helpful to turn one more time to possible-worlds semantics, and more precisely to first-order possible-worlds semantics with varying domains: here not only every world is associated with a domain of objects, as first-order modal logic requires, but worlds may be associated with different domains of objects. Indeed, a straightforward way to cash out Husserl's insight is to say

11. Husserl labels the first kind of truth—truth with respect to the actual sphere—as "Wahrheit als Gültigkeit der Wirklichkeitssetzung", and the second kind of truth—truth with respect to an assumed sphere—as "Wahrheit als Richtigkeit der Anpassung" [Husserl 2003, 178–179].

that, according to him, existential judgments are judgments as to whether, relatively to one world or sphere, a given object lies within or outside the domain of objects associated with the world or sphere at stake.[12] From this perspective—one should underline—the spheres of being do not simply fulfill the function of contexts of evaluation, but, via the domain of objects associated with them, provide a reference to (singular) negative existential judgments.

We may now see how Husserl's approach blocks the paradox of non-existence. Husserl, as Meinong before him, rejects the premise according to which, if we refer to something, this something has to exist (2). However, this is achieved not through the introduction of questionable subsisting theoretical entities such as Meinong's objectives, but rather through a semantics that distinguishes between different spheres of being and the domains associated with these spheres of being. Notice, moreover, that such an approach saves the intuition addressed above according to which there has to be something which makes a judgment true: what there is to make negative existential judgments true is the domain of objects associated with the actual sphere of being.

5 Husserl's Fregeanism and Meinong's Meinongianism

Before restating the reasons why Husserl's solution of the paradox of non-existence should be preferred to Meinong's, it is helpful to briefly address two questions linked to the contemporary debate in analytic philosophy, namely whether Husserl is a Fregean, and Meinong a Meinongian.

The claim that Husserl is a Fregean was defended by [Føllesdal 1969] and later by [Smith & McIntyre 1982] always in relation to his work *Ideen I* [Husserl 1913]. Indeed, different passages of *Ideen I* may hint to the fact that the notion of *noema* is related to Frege's notion of sense. However, I am not taking a stance here with respect to this interpretation. The only thing I would like to stress is that such an approach is definitely not present in his lectures. If the Fregean sense is something that plays a mediator role between the signs of our language and the objects to which language may refer, it is indeed clear that nothing equivalent to it can be found in the account I have analyzed. It is true that Husserl, as Frege before him, talks of a difference between *Sinn* und *Bedeutung*. However, by this, he does not designate two different kinds of entities. Rather, he is addressing a different level of depth in the

12. This conception of existence is formally defined by [Hughes & Creswell 1996, 292] as follows:

$$[VE] \quad \langle u, w \rangle \in V(E) if f u \in D_w$$

The meaning of this definition is that, given an existential judgment Ex and a world w, this judgment is true at w if and only if x is assigned a member of D_w, i.e., an object within the domain associated with w.

understanding of the same judgment. The sense is nothing else than a not fully determined meaning.

With respect to Meinong, the focus on his solution to the paradox of non-existence clearly shows how, ironically, he is not a Meinongian. The Meinongian interpretation of existence takes it to express an (almost) perfectly ordinary predicate: an object exists if it falls within the extension of an existence predicate and it does not if it falls outside its extension (see [Parsons 1980], [Routley 1980], [Jacquette 1996], [Zalta 1988], and [Priest 2005]). This strategy enables Neo-Meinongians to save the intuition that it is always the object that we speak about that makes our sentences true—an intuition that Meinong thought he had to give up. As we have seen, according to Meinong the objects of our judgments become so to speak irrelevant to the assessment of the truth of judgments.

6 Conclusion

Both Meinong and Husserl tried to show how Achilles overtakes the tortoise: negative existential judgments are not self-refuting judgments and hence should not be expunged from our language. Meinong's strategy consists in saying that a judgment is true if and only if it refers to a subsisting theoretical entity labeled by him as objective. Thus, such judgments as "Santa does not exist" and "Santa has a beard" are true because they refer to different subsisting objectives. The drawback of this solution is that we are bound to a semantics that is, if anything, at least not fine-grained enough to go beyond the propositional structure of judgments. Husserl, to the contrary, does not retreat to a propositional analysis but moves forward to an extension of predicate logic: to him, existential judgments have to be interpreted on the background of different spheres or levels of being, and the domain of objects associated with them. More precisely, the judgment (say) "Santa Claus does not exist" is true if and only if the object Santa Claus does not fall within the domain of objects associated with the actual sphere of being. However, "Santa Claus" has at least to refer to an object within the domain of a non-actual sphere of being, which thus provides the reference to the name "Santa Claus".

To go back one last time to the metaphor of Procrustes, we may conclude by saying that Meinong's bed, although it does prevent the body of our language from being amputated, presents the inconvenience of being too large. But this is, after all, still a Procrustean malpractice: the body of our language has to be stretched to fit the bed. Indeed, the legendary bandit had two ways of torturing his victims: either by amputating them if too big; or by stretching them if too small. Out of metaphor, Meinong's approach obliterates any distinction between existential judgments and predicative judgments—a distinction which we all intuitively acknowledge and thus a difference we should be able to cash out from a logico-philosophical perspective. On the other hand,

Husserl provides us with a truly non-Procrustean solution: the bed neatly fits the body of our language and thereby sheds light on the peculiar character of existential judgments as something radically different from standard predicative judgments. Whereas predicative judgments are evaluated by "looking" only at one sphere of being at a time, existential ones only make sense if we "look" at more than one sphere of being at a time.

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